

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6355

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CSCE, SOPN, UR, US, GW, PO, SP,XH

SUBJECT: SHRILL SOVIET PROPAGANDA ATTACK ON RFE/FL CONTINUES

REF: (A) MOSCOW 5968, (B) MOSCOW 5925, (C) MUNICH 1138 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: MAJOR ARTICLES IN TWO IMPORTANT NEWSPAPERS,
IZVESTIYA AND SOVYETSKAYA ROSSIYA, INDICATE THAT THE SOVIETS
ARE CONTINUING THEIR ANTI-RFE/RL CAMPAIGN AT HIGH LEVEL.

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THE STORIES NAME MANY RL STAFFERS, AND MANAGE TO PLAY
NEARLY EVERY CONCEIVABLE VARIATION ON THE THEME OF THE
EVILS OF THE STATIONS. THE THREAT TO RETALIATE AGAINST THE
RADIOS IS REITERATED. WE SEE THESE ARTICLES AS AN
INDICATION THAT THE PRE-BELGRADE ATTACK ON THE RADIOS
WILL CONTINUE AND PRESUMABLY CREST JUST BEFORE THE CSCE
REVIEW CONFERENCE OPENS. END SUMMARY.

1. MAY 4 IZVESTIYA CARRIES LONG ARTICLE BY V. KASSIS AND N. MIKHAILOV ON ACTIVITIES OF RFE/RL. ARTICLE APPEARS UNDER THE RUBRIC "WORLD OF CAPITAL" AND IS ENTITLED "THERE IS THEIR 'FREEDOM'" ARTICLE BEGINS BY QUOTING FROM MINISTRY'S DEMARCHE ON RFE/RL AND GOES ON TO NOTE A RECENT DER SPIEGEL ARTICLE WHICH COMMENTS ON THE NAZI PAST OF SEVERAL RFE/RL STAFF MEMBERS. IT CITES A NUMBER OF NAMES AND HAS TWO PHOTOS OF DOCUMENTS WHICH ARE MEANT TO PROVE THE ALLEGATIONS OF NAZI BACKGROUND/ OF TWO RL EMPLOYEES. THE ARTICLE THEN LISTS SEVERAL "THIRD WAVE" STAFF MEMBERS' FINDELSHTAYN, KABATCHNIK AND GALICH, AND OBSERVES THAT THESE PEOPLE REFER TO THEMSELVES WRONGLY AS "DISSIDENTS" AND "FIGHTERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS." THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO CRITICIZE THE NEW AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION FOR HAVING ASKED FOR \$14 MILLION TO INCREASE TRANSMITTING POWER AND COMMENTS THAT THIS IS HARDLY CONSISTENT WITH THE EXPRESSED DESIRE OF THE WHITE HOUSE FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE. AS AN EXAMPLE OF RFL' TENDENTIOUS PROGRAMMING THE ARTICLE CRITICIZES THE COVERAGE OF MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE.

3. THE AUTHORS THEN TURN TO THE LOCATION OF THE RADIO'S HEADQUARTERS AND TRANSMITTERS. ACCORDING TO AN "AMERICAN SPECIALIST R. HALL", MUNICH WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE OF ITS FAVORABLE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND BECAUSE OF A LARGE POOL OF EMIGRANTS AVAILABLE TO WORK

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FOR THE RADIOS. THE LEGAL BASIS OF RFE/RL OPERATIONS IN THE FRG IS QUESTIONED; THE AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH RL OPERATES IN THE FRG ALLOWS ONLY FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES WHEREAS THE USG NOW HAS DECLARED THAT THE RADIOS ARE PART OF THE USG.

4. THE ARTICLE COMPLAINS ABOUT PLANS TO EXPAND THE RADIOS' FACILITIES. IT LINKS RFE/RL TO RIAS, NOTES THE PLANS TO CONTINUE THE USE OF RL FACILITIES IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN, AND ASSERTS THAT THE RADIOS PLAN TO BROADCAST FROM THE UK AS WELL. IN ALL OF THESE COUNTRIES, STATES THE ARTICLE, THERE IS INCREASING PROTEST OVER THE EXISTENCE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE RADIOS.

5. THE LAST PORTION OF THE ARTICLE CONSISTS OF EXTRACTS FROM SEVERAL LETTERS RECEIVED BY IZVESTIYA FROM "CONCERNED SOVIET CITIZENS" WHO OBJECT TO THE RADIOS AND THEIR PROGRAMS. THE POINT IS MADE THAT THE LETTERS COME FROM PEOPLE IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE WHO LIVE THROUGHOUT THE SOVIET UNION. THE

ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH A QUOTATION FROM THE MINISTRY'S DEMARCHE THREATENING RETALIATION.

6. APRIL 27 SOVIETSKAYA ROSSIYA CARRIES AN ACCOUNT BY TASS CORRESPONDENTS VINOGRADOV AND URBAN. THEIR STORY IS APPARENTLY BASED ON THEIR UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO MEET WITH RL/RFE LEADERSHIP (REF C). MUCH OF THE STORY IS A STRAIGHTFORWARD, IF TENDENTIOUS REPORT OF THE PHYSICAL LAYOUT OF THE RADIOS AND THEIR RECEPTION BY REDLICH OF RFE/RL. THE STORY ALSO QUOTES THE NAMES OF SEVERAL EX-SOVIET RL STAFF MEMBERS AND, LIKE HE IZVESTIYA PIECE, MAKES THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN "SECOND" AND "THIRD" WAVE EMIGRANTS. UNLIKE THE IZVESTIYA PIECE, HOWEVER, THE STORY NAMES MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN STAFF, INCLUDING JON LODESEN ("EXPELLED" FRO THE USSR), GERD VON DOEMING (IDENTIFIED ONLY AS "GERD, SPECIAL POLITICAL CENSOR"), PERRY, REDLICH AND MAHONEY.
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7. ARTICLE ALSO MENTIONS THE GERMAN CONTEXT IN WHICH RFE/RL OPERATES. IT CLAIMS THAT RADIOS RECEIVE SUPPORT OF CSU "DIRECTED BY STRAUSS, LEADER OF THE ARCH-REACTIONARY CIRCLES OF THE FRG." THE ANTI-RL VIEWS OF SPD BUNDESTAG DEPUTY KARL-HEINZ HANSEN ARE GIVEN AT SOME LENGTH. HANSEN IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE RADIOS ARE FINANCED BY THE USA AND FACT THAT THE FRG HAS NO CONTROL OVER THE BROADCASTS IS A LIMITATION OF GERMAN SOVEREIGNTY.

8. COMMENT: THESE PIECES SEEM EVEN MORE SHRILL IN TONE AND COMPREHENSIVE IN THEIR CRITICISM OF THE TWO MUNICH-BASED RADIOS THAN OTHER RECENT ATTACKS. BOTH ARTICLES CONSISTENTLY REFER TO BOTH RFE AND RL AND LINK THEM, BUT THE EXAMPLES OF THE RADIOS' MISDEEDS AND THE NAMES OF STAFF MEMBERS CONCERN ONLY RL. BETWEEN THEM THE ARTICLES MANAGE TO TOUCH ON NEARLY EVERY ASPECT OF THE EXISTENCE AND ACTIVITIES OF RL. WHILE ALL OF THE POINTS WHICH THE ARTICLES MAKE HAVE PREVIOUSLY APPEARED IN PRESS CRITICISM, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME THAT WE HAVE SEEN SO MANY OF THE OBJECTIONS CARRIED IN JUST TWO ARTICLES.

9. IN THIS CONNECTION WE WERE STRUCK BY THE THINLY VEILED APPEAL TO SOVIET ANTI-SEMITIC SENTIMENT. BOTH ARTICLES, FOR INSTANCE, NOTE THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEFT THE USSR OSTENSIBLY FOR ISRAEL IN FACT HAVE ENDED UP WORKING FOR THE RADIOS. SEVERAL NAMES OF RL STAFF MEMBERS MENTIONED ARE OBVIOUSLY JEWISH. (WE WERE SLIGHTLY SURPRISED THAT GALICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN MENTIONED BY NAME. GIVEN THE FACT OF HIS GREAT POPULARITY IN THE USSR BEFORE HIS EMIGRATION, SUCH MENTION MIGHT

ENCOURAGE SOME PEOPLE TO TRY TO TUNE IN RL.) AT THE SAME TIME, AN ATTEMPT IS MADE TO INSINUATE AN ANTI-SEMITIC CHARACTER TO SOME OF THE RADIOS' STAFF. ONE OF THE LETTERS TO IZVESTIYA (QUOTED EXTENSIVELY IN THE ARTICLE) WAS FROM A MR. WEISBERG. IN ADDITION TO MAKING THE OBLIGATORY CONFIDENTIAL

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POINTS AGAINST RL AND IN FAVOR OF THE USSR, WEISBERG NOTES HOW HIS FAMILY SUFFERED IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR. THIS PRESUMABLY IS INTENDED TO BE JUXTAPOSED TO THE ALLEGED FASCIST PAST OF SOME RL STAFF MEMBERS.

10. THE REPETITION OF THE THREAT TO RETALIATE, COMING AS IT DOES AT THE END OF THE ARTICLE IN IZVESTIYA (THE NATIONALLY CIRCULATED, ALL-UNION GOVERNMENTAL DAILY) WHICH NAMED ALL THE COUNTRIES THAT PROVIDE RL WITH FACILITIES, SEEMS TO US A CLEAR INDICATION OF SOVIETS INTENTION TO UNDERTAKE THE DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN FORECAST IN REF A. WE ALSO SEE THE LINKAGE OF RFE AND RL AS INDICATIVE OF LIKELY SOVIET PRESSURE ON THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ANTI-RFE STAND. IN ANY CASE, THE PRESS CAMPAIGN WILL PRESUMABLY CONTINUE, PEAKING JUST BEFORE THE BELGRADE CSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE BEGINS.
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Message Attributes

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